

FIRE COMMITTEE MINUTES

September 12, 2002

The Fire Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on September 12, 2002 at 9:25 a.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Claudia Walters, Chairman
Mike Whalen

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Keno Hawker
Janie Thom

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson

COMMITTEE ABSENT

Dennis Kavanaugh

(Chairman Walters excused Committeemember Kavanaugh from the meeting.)

1. Hear an update on the addition of signage to new fire station locations and the progress of the fire station construction projects currently underway.

Fire Chief Dennis Compton introduced Assistant Fire Chief Paul Wilson, Assistant Fire Chief Cliff Puckett, Assistant Fire Chief Bob Deleon and Management Assistant Dorinda Larsen to the members of the Committee.

Chief Wilson addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item and reported that on May 23, 2002, Chairman Walters recommended that the Fire Department add signage to the City's new fire station locations notifying the public of the scheduled openings for the facilities and outlining the progress of fire station construction projects that are currently underway. Chief Wilson explained that as a result of the recommendation, the Real Estate Services Division has added opening date placards to the existing fire station signs.

Chief Wilson displayed graphics in the Council Chambers and briefly detailed the following construction projects: Fire Station #202, 830 South Stapley Drive, scheduled for completion in October 2002; Fire Station #217, 10434 East Baseline Road, scheduled for completion in December 2002, and Fire Station #206 and Volunteer Center, 815 North Lindsay Road, scheduled for completion in Spring 2003. He also outlined future fire station locations at 32nd Street and McDowell Road, and Pecos Road and Mountain Road.

Chairman Walters thanked staff for their efforts relative to this issue.

2. Hear an update on the recent efforts to enhance the City's Emergency Management Program.

Chief Cliff Puckett addressed the members of the Committee relative to this agenda item. He reported that the City of Mesa has a proactive Emergency Management Program which has been in place for several years, and that as a result of the events of September 11, 2001, there has been an increase in activities related to the program.

Chief Puckett stated that there are currently a variety of Federal funding opportunities available to support the City's Emergency Management Program; that Mesa has received monies through a grant from the Department of Justice (DOJ) to enable the City to purchase weapons of mass destruction equipment (decontamination equipment, detection equipment, communications equipment and personal protective equipment); that the City of Mesa has recently received \$350,000 as part of the grant, and that an additional \$325,000 will be forthcoming.

Chief Puckett advised that the State of Arizona has also obtained monies to address bio-terrorism preparedness efforts and that such funds are earmarked for State hospitals, the enhancement of State labs to obtain results more quickly, and various surveillance tools to determine if a biological release has occurred. He said that the City of Mesa is represented on a State committee that is charged with the task of allocating funds, and he assured the members of the Committee that an equitable share of the funds will be distributed to Mesa hospitals.

Chief Puckett presented an overview of additional Federal funding opportunities including the First Responder Initiative, which provides for planning, training and equipment to combat bio-terrorism. He commented that the City of Mesa has also entered into a contract with the Department of Health and Human Services to develop a Metropolitan Medical Response Plan (MMRP) designed to respond to a terrorist event in the community. Chief Puckett noted that although Mesa has completed its MMRP, this year it will address ten key areas which are considered weaknesses, including improved preparation on the part of Mesa hospitals to handle a terrorist event, and also the ability to immunize a large number of citizens.

Discussion ensued relative to the Homeland Security Advisory System; the fact that it is designed to inform communities of the various threat levels relative to the possibility of terrorist attacks; the designation of the various color levels, and the notification procedure being developed throughout the City organization.

Chief Puckett advised that the Mesa Fire Department is endeavoring to expand the awareness of City employees relative to emergency preparedness through the integration of education into existing City programs. He added that Public Service Announcements (PSAs) are also being shown on Mesa Channel 11 to provide the community with information relative to this issue.

In response to a question from Chairman Walters, Chief Puckett clarified that it is the goal of the Mesa Fire Department to create a total emergency management system which will educate citizens relative to a variety of concerns including terrorism, and natural and technological disasters.

Chief Puckett further commented on the Mesa Fire Department's efforts to monitor the design and implementation plans of a Community Notification System for Maricopa County. He reported that the system will provide the City with the ability to notify its residents by phone relative to the existence of an emergency situation, as well as provide additional instructions.

Chief Puckett explained that the system, with the messages offered in English and Spanish, will have the capacity to place 2,000 calls per minute, leave messages on answering machines, and also place repeat calls to homes where there was no answer initially.

Chief Puckett advised that in order to receive various grant funding, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requires that communities now have a Disaster Mitigation Plan in place by November 2003. He commented that City staff is partnering with Maricopa County Emergency Management's team to develop Mesa's plan which will ultimately require Council approval.

Further discussion ensued relative to the formation of a Citizens Corps designed to increase volunteerism throughout the country; the Operation Terrorism Information and Prevention System, formed to raise citizens' awareness levels; the Medical Reserve Corps created to establish a medical personnel roster to assist during a disaster, and the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program, established to train citizens to assist the Police Department during an emergency situation.

Chief Puckett concluded his remarks by noting that as a result of a suggestion made by Mayor Hawker, on December 10, 2002, the City will host a Mayors' Terrorism Preparedness Conference which will be offered by the DOJ. He stated that he has already received commitments from a number of Valley mayors who wish to attend the event.

Chairman Walters thanked Chief Puckett for his informative presentation.

3. Hear an update on specific wild land preparedness efforts.

Chief Puckett addressed the members of the Committee and provided a brief overview of the efforts of the Mesa Fire Department during the recent Rodeo Chediski fires in northeastern Arizona. He reported that three engine companies were dispatched to White River and the Heber area to assist the residents of those communities impacted by the disaster. Chief Deleon added that members of the Department also assisted with staffing the County Liaison position in the State Emergency Operations Center.

Chief Puckett commented that in response to a letter sent to Mayor Hawker by Governor Hull requesting that local governments review emergency policies and procedures relative to public protection from wild land fires, an Emergency Operations Plan has already been implemented by the City. He added that the plan will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Chief Deleon stated that the Mesa Fire Department is addressing wild land/urban interface fire issues on several levels. He explained that City crews regularly monitor the community for obvious fire hazards such as overgrown weeds or brush and direct the homeowners to clean up the area per City ordinance. Chief Deleon also noted that Mesa is divided into plats considered wild life/urban interface areas and it is in those areas that City crews concentrate their efforts. He added that the Mesa Fire Department has also created an educational pamphlet that is distributed to Mesa homeowners and provides informational material relative to the creation of a safety zone around a home and various "do's and don'ts" for urban and brush fires.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the Mesa Fire Department will continue to address wild land/urban fire safety matters, and that it is the goal of the Department that all City firefighters become "red card certified," thereby qualifying them to fight wild land fires.

Chairman Walters thanked Chief Puckett and Chief Deleon for their presentation.

4. Hear an update on Fire Prevention Week 2002 activities.

Chief Deleon reported that *Team up for Safety* is this year's theme for National Fire Prevention Week 2002, which will take place between October 5th and 12th. He advised that the Mesa Fire Department has planned a wide array of activities to promote the program including visits by the Fire Prevention Week clown to a number of schools in the City; the Fire Prevention Opening Event at Home Depot, 1749 South Country Club Drive on Saturday, October 5, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.; Fire Department Open Houses on Thursday, October 10, from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.; the Annual Pancake Breakfast located at Station 1, 13 West First Street, Friday October 11 from 6:30 to 9:00 a.m., and the Closing Event located at the Canal Festival at Hohokam Stadium, Saturday, October 12, between 8:00 a.m. and noon.

Committeemember Whalen commended staff for their efforts and hard work during the annual Fire Prevention Week activities.

Chief Compton reported that the National Fire Prevention Association, the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week in North America, has recognized Mesa as one of three cities nationwide for its outstanding efforts relative to Fire Prevention Week. He stated that Chicago and Los Angeles are the other cities receiving this honor.

Chairman Walters commended the Fire Department for their well-deserved recognition.

5. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Fire Committee Meeting adjourned at 10:10 a.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Fire Committee Meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 12th day of September 2002. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK